9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me [296] that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

● [234] [539] She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.